



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/602,384	06/24/2003	Richard J. Mehus	1092-015US01 (1653US01)	9839
28863 7590 04/07/2008 SHUMAKER & SIEFFERT, P. A. 1625 RADIO DRIVE SUITE 300 WOODBURY, MN 55125				
EXAMINER SINES, BRIAN J				
ART UNIT 1797		PAPER NUMBER		
NOTIFICATION DATE 04/07/2008		DELIVERY MODE ELECTRONIC		

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Notice of the Office communication was sent electronically on above-indicated "Notification Date" to the following e-mail address(es):

docketing@ssiplaw.com

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/602,384

Applicant(s)

MEHUS ET AL.

Examiner

Brian J. Sines

Art Unit

1797

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 13 February 2008.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-7, 14-22 and 24 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 14-17 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-7, 18-22 and 24 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB-08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(c), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(c) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 2/13/2008 has been entered.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments with respect to the amended claims have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection. The previous prior art rejection has been modified in view of applicant's arguments and amendments.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

Claims 1 – 7, 18 – 22 and 24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nomura et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,706,533) (“Nomura”).

Regarding claims 1 – 3, 5, 18 – 22 and 24, Nomura teaches a concentration detection apparatus for determining the concentration of a user selectable product solution comprising: a conductivity probe 5; a temperature sensor 6; and a controller 9 that uses a predetermined algorithm or equation for calculating a concentration (see, e.g., col. 9, line 19 – col. 12, line 56; figure 1). The concentration value is calculated using a linear equation that is a function of temperature and conductivity based on previous empirical measurements on known standard solution concentrations (see, e.g., col. 7, lines 25 – 61; col. 13, line 16 – col. 15, line 45).

Nomura does not specifically teach the use of a resistance probe in place of the conductivity probe with the disclosed measurement device.

The applicant is advised that the Supreme Court recently clarified that a claim can be proved obvious merely by showing that the combination of known elements was obvious to try. In this regard, the Supreme Court explained that, “[w]hen there is a design need or market pressure to solve a problem and there are a finite number of identified, predictable solutions, a person of ordinary skill in the art has a good reason to pursue the known options within his or her technical grasp.” An obviousness determination is not the result of a rigid formula disassociated from the consideration of the facts of the case. Indeed, the common sense of those skilled in the art demonstrates why some combinations would have been obvious where others would not. The combination of familiar elements is likely to be obvious when it does no more than yield predictable results. Furthermore, the simple substitution of one known element for another is likely to be obvious when predictable results are achieved. See *KSR Int’l v. Teleflex Inc.*, 127

Sup. Ct. 1727, 1742, 82 USPQ2d 1385, 1397 (2007). In this regard, the use of resistance probes in performing chemical measurements is very well known in the art (see MPEP 2144.03).

Resistivity is merely the inverse of conductivity. The use of a resistance probe would have been predictable in facilitating a chemical concentration measurement with the disclosed measurement device. Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to use a resistance probe with the disclosed measurement device in facilitating a concentration measurement.

Furthermore, the controller 9 can store information previously inputted for facilitating concentration value determination depending on what solutions are being used (see, e.g., col. 9, lines 20 – 49). Since disclosed detection apparatus comprises a programmed computer controller, the apparatus inherently comprises a memory feature (see, e.g., col. 4, lines 64 – 67). The apparatus can be used to monitor a plurality of different product agents, such as sodium carbonate, sodium hydroxide, etc. (see, e.g., col. 9, lines 5 – 12). It is considered predictable that the memory of the disclosed computer controller could store a plurality of different predetermined algorithms associated with different product agents. It would have been within the ambit of a person of ordinary skill in the art to store a plurality of different algorithms for different product agents within a memory feature of the disclosed apparatus to facilitate effective product monitoring for each of the product agents. The simple substitution of one known element, such as a predetermined algorithm in this instance, for another is likely to be obvious when predictable results are achieved. See *KSR Int'l v. Teleflex Inc.*, 127 Sup. Ct. 1727, 1742, 82 USPQ2d 1385, 1397 (2007). Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to incorporate a memory feature storing a plurality of different predetermined

algorithms associated with different product agents or classifications in order to effectively use the disclosed monitoring apparatus in monitoring different product agents.

Regarding claim 4, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to incorporate the use of a user interface, such as with a computer display monitor, to report the calculated concentration to a user.

Regarding claim 7, Nomura teaches that the disclosed apparatus can be used to prepare chemical solutions with a predetermined concentration (see, e.g., col. 1, lines 5 – 12). Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to further control the addition of a product solution to the use solution when the concentration falls below a predetermined concentration level.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Brian J. Sines whose telephone number is (571) 272-1263. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday - Friday (11 AM - 8 PM EST).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Jill A. Warden can be reached on (571) 272-1267. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

Brian J. Sines
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 1797

/Brian J. Sines/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 1797